

THE COMPLETE STORY OF THE STRIKE

The riots which took place in Shanghai on the afternoon of May 30 were the aftermath of a strike which had been going on for some days previous at the Naiga Wata Kaisha (Japanese) cotton mill, incidental to which there had been much commotion, one Chinese having been killed. The growing feeling of indignation among certain sections of the Chinese public, the student class particularly, crystallized when six of the workers were brought before Japanese Assessor Tajima and Magistrate Loh at the Mixed Court in Shanghai on the forenoon of May 30. It is to be noted that the afternoon of May 30 was a Saturday half-holiday, with a large proportion of the foreign public, including some of the police officials, attending either the races at Kiangwan, the regatta at Henli, or the usual sports at the Public Recreation Ground.

Students from the majority of the Chinese schools organized a procession of protest and, despite warnings from the Municipal authorities that they would not be allowed to carry out their plans, they persisted, and began parading Nanking Road in the neighborhood of the Recreation Ground, and the streets in that vicinity, carrying banners, some of protest and others of an inflammatory character, the leaders among them making speeches to the huge crowds of Chinese of all classes, which in the natural course of events assembled to see what was going on.

The streets on which the students were doing their parading was in the district which is looked after by the Louza Police Station, situated in a compound several hundred feet north of Nanking road, entrance to which is had by a passageway about fifteen feet wide. The Police station on the same site had been burned down by a mob twenty years previously during riots which arose out of a dispute between the Chinese Magistrate and the British Assessor at the Mixed Court concerning the disposition of women prisoners.

When the Louza station, shortly before two o'clock on the afternoon of May 30 received reports that students were making speeches of an inflammatory character and carrying flags with anti-foreign sentiments, a detachment was sent to the various points of disturbance and they were ordered to disperse. This they refused to do. When this was reported to Inspector Everson, in charge of the Station, he with a party of European police, made an investigation and arrested three students, one of them in the midst of speech-making.

When the arrests were made a large crowd followed the police and their prisoners along the road to the station, a very customary state of affairs in Shanghai. The students who had been arrested admitted that their speeches and parades were part of a demonstration by students generally against the killing of the Chinese workman in the Japanese cotton mill and that they were anti-Japanese in character. A large proportion of those who had crowded into the police station were fellow students of the three that had been arrested and when they were ordered to leave they refused to do so; instead of leaving they "insisted" on being locked up and they were accommodated. A few minutes later the Inspector proceeded to Thibet Road where another student gathering had assembled. Here a student carrying an anti-Japanese banner was arrested and the usual crowd followed to the Police station. Here again the same thing occurred. The students who had crowded into the station asked to be incarcerated with their comrade and they were thereupon also locked up.

In the meantime in various districts the police were trying to control the enormous crowds which were collecting in Nanking Road, in Thibet Road and the streets in that

neighborhood. In Thibet Road a foreign police constable by the name of Stevens was knocked down shortly before three o'clock while attempting to disperse a crowd. Six of the Chinese were arrested and the usual crowd followed to the Police Station. Many of those who crowded into the station, so as to show their sympathy with those who had been arrested requested to be locked up also, but the Police authorities, evidently come to the conclusion that, as the quarters were becoming crowded, the time had come to change tactics, and accordingly orders were given to drive the crowds out. Incidental to the confusion that ensued the Chinese who had been arrested in connection with the assault escaped.

The police, according to their report, used their sticks and batons freely, after they had got the crowd out of the station compound, driving the crowd before them along Nanking Road, but when the crowd got as far as Wing On's, where it evidently got jammed up with the crowd in the cross streets, the mob spirit began to assert itself, several foreign police constables were set upon, one was knocked down and attempts were made to wrest his pistol from him. With pure force of numbers the huge Chinese crowd drove back the party of foreign, Indian and Chinese police, and with might and main tried to wrest the firearms which they were carrying. The cry of "Kill the Foreigners" was now raised, the police party in the meantime retreating slowly to the Louza Police Station entrance. Here the police made a stand, and when the crowd tried to rush them Inspector Everson gave the order to fire, the firing being done by Sikh (Indian) members of the force. Four Chinese in the crowd were killed outright and a larger number were wounded. So far as disorder in the neighborhood of the Police Station was concerned, the shooting put an end to it. But the incident initiated a movement, the end of which is not yet in sight.

The student campaign had caught the Chinese popular fancy. The handbills which the Chinese students were distributing spoke of imperialism, of the favored position which foreigners enjoy in China generally and in the Foreign Settlements particularly, of the building of roads by the Municipal Council beyond Settlement limits, and other matters, the facts of which were greatly distorted, but all having a tendency to inflame Chinese public opinion.

A matter which in the meantime has almost been lost sight of is that a special meeting of the Ratepayers had been called for June 2, at which it was proposed to pass by-laws compelling all printers to register, to regulate child labor, and to increase the wharfrage dues. Numerous previous attempts had been made to effect this legislation without success. There was pronounced Chinese opposition to the proposed legislation, and, although the call for the meeting was not abandoned, not nearly enough Ratepayers assembled to constitute a quorum. It was to be noted that the Japanese ratepayers apparently took no interest in the proposed legislation, although when some years previously legislation on the subject of printed matter came before the Ratepayers they marched into the assembly hall in a solid body. The legislation against which the Chinese, by advertisements and banners, had so vigorously protested never came to fruition because of the lack of a quorum, but the opposition which had manifested itself against the proposals which the foreign Ratepayers were asked by some of their fellow Ratepayers to pass now crystallized among the Chinese into a movement, not exactly anti-foreign, but intended to bring the foreign control of the Settlement into disrepute.

One of the first things the Municipal Council did was to proclaim martial law. The Volunteers were called out and they have, with a short breathing spell now and then, been on duty ever since. Despite the vigorous protests of the students and the "demands" which various Chinese bodies were making, and despite the opinions expressed by many foreigners that the police were rather precipitate in using firearms on the afternoon of the fateful May 30, the attitude of the police immediately after the event and ever since has been that order must be maintained at all costs.

One of the immediate results of the May 30th incident was the calling of a general strike, which, at first, manifested itself mostly by the Chinese merchants and shopkeepers closing their doors—which, so far as the foreign community was concerned, caused it little inconvenience but this soon was followed by strikes of employees in various foreign industries, to the time of writing the most effective strike is that directed against British and Japanese shipping, particularly the former. As regards industrial establishments the Chinese efforts were particularly directed against cotton mills, tobacco factories, and printing offices, and, although, to a certain extent these strikes are the result of student agitation and intimidation on the part of the newly formed

unions of workers, it is to be noted that these industries are ones in which Chinese capitalists have been making great advances in recent years, and it is probably more than a coincidence that the Chinese printing establishments and the Chinese tobacco companies were heavy contributors to the funds which have been and are being collected to support the strikers during their period of idleness.

From the very beginning of the troubles the foreign press in Shanghai has been charging that Bolshevist activities are at the back of the disturbances, although specific instances have in most instances not been definitely proved, undoubtedly, however, Bolshevist influence has had its effect in China particularly among the student class. During the first days of the disturbances various Russians were arrested on suspicion of fomenting trouble, but little has been heard of Bolshevist activities during recent weeks, outside of the trial of "Comrade" Dosser at the Mixed Court, reference to which is made further on.

Having now given the reader a general idea of the situation, the events beginning from the first of June are given below in the form of a diary.

June 1.—Municipal Council declares martial law. Loitering on streets forbidden. Nanking Road takes on aspect of armed camp. Shopkeepers go on strike, but in the great majority of cases conduct business surreptitiously. Tramcars and buses are attacked by mobs, passengers being stoned, the object of the agitators being to induce the employees to go on strike. When a mob attacks tramcars at the Nanking and Chekiang road corner and when attempts to disperse them by the use of fire fighting apparatus (streams of water) prove unsuccessful the police fire into the mob, killing one and injuring seventeen. Several Chinese are also shot in other parts of the Settlement as the result of refusing to disperse when ordered to do so by the police. Attempts to induce tramway employees to go on strike prove abortive (and a fairly good tram service has been operated every day). Consular Body requests the sending of warships to Shanghai.

June 2.—Special meeting of Ratepayers fails owing to lack of quorum. American member of S. V. C. receives minor wound inflicted by unknown sniper. Two Chinese are killed and five wounded in encounters with police. General strike movement spreads, the entire Chinese staff (numbering over 3,000) of the Electricity Dept. fails to show up for work, but their places are taken by the permanent foreign staff and about a hundred Russians, and no break in the service occurs. American and Italian sailors are landed.

June 3.—Estimated number of strikers reaches 150,000, principal walkout being in the factories of the British—American Tobacco Co. Business at a standstill. Many clerks in banks and boys in clubs and hotels join strike, but the strike among house servants does not become general.

June 4.—Chinese employees of all foreign newspapers go on strike, but all publish issues, although curtailed in size. (All the foreign newspapers except one have been produced ever since without any Chinese help. One of the Shanghai papers has been issuing its editions by mimeograph ever since the first day of the strike.)

June 5.—To date ten American destroyers and gunboats arrive in port. Municipal electricity works being guarded by American naval detachment. Inflammatory posters appear surreptitiously in all parts of the Settlement. Prominent Chinese (names not disclosed) propose a plan for peace, and appeal to their fellow countrymen to preserve order. Chinese government delegates arrive to investigate.

June 6.—Rioters in Peking wreck police station. Demonstrations held in cities all over China to show sympathy with the Shanghai movement. Tendency to violence in Shanghai lessens, but boycott and strike spirit strengthens. Consular Body answers note of protest from Chinese Commissioner of Foreign Affairs. Chinese members of Shanghai Volunteer Corps remain faithful and, incur the wrath of their fellow countrymen (The Chinese members of the S. V. C. have been doing their duty nobly ever since) Members of Chinese Advisory Council notify Municipal Council of their resignation.

June 7.—Chinese wharf coolies in Shanghai join general strike thus preventing the loading and unloading of cargoes, although the strike is only enforced strictly as regards British and Japanese ships. Four Chinese gunboats shell the Bund at Canton, Yunnanese troops on shore replying.

June 8.—Foreign volunteers in every walk of life keep essential services such as bakeries, hotels and restaurants in operation. Boy Scouts take up positions vacated by Chinese, and foreign women organize camp kitchens to

provide refreshments for Volunteers on duty. Chinese seamen on British coast and river steamers walk out, boats being tied up as they arrive.

June 9.—News received in Shanghai that two battalions of Fengtien troops will take up positions in Chapei. Chinese hotel employees, clerks in foreign banks and business houses gradually resume their duties. At trial of May 30 rioters at Mixed Court British missionary gives evidence that police measures were justified. Attempts to have Chinese members of Municipal Police go on strike prove abortive except in a few isolated instances. Chinese Merchant Volunteers fire into mob at Brennan road.

June 10.—At adjourned hearing of rioters at Mixed Court two missionaries criticise police action. Delegation from Diplomatic Body at Peking arrives in Shanghai to investigate the strike and to negotiate for a settlement. Chinese Chamber of Commerce appoints a committee of twenty-three to investigate the strike and arrive at a "just settlement." Students at Peking storm Waichaioupu with a demand that troops be sent to Shanghai.

June 11.—Monster mass meeting is staged at Public Recreation Ground outside Shanhai Native City at which various "demands" such as the severing of economic relations with England and Japan, the abolition of extraterritoriality, the abolition of unequal treaties, etc., are made. Trial of student rioters at Mixed Court comes to a close with a judgment requiring the students to sign a bond for their good behavior. Strike pay is doled out to strikers from fund which has been raised from Chinese manufacturers and business men. At Hankow a riot breaks out on the borders of the British Concession and as a result eight Chinese are killed; mob vents its fury upon Japanese.

June 12.—Trial of rioters in Chekiang road affair ends with some imprisoned and others fined. Thirteen "demands" are presented by special committee of Chinese Chamber of Commerce to the Bureau of Foreign Affairs for transmittal to the Consular Body; the demands include the retrocession of the Mixed Court to its pre-Revolution status and the admission of Chinese members to the Municipal Council.

June 13.—Mob at Kiukiang burns Bank of Taiwan and loots British and Japanese Consulates. Yunnanese army at Canton surrenders after defeat. Part of foreign defense forces are withdrawn at Shanghai as an earnest of goodwill.

June 14.—25,000 students at Tientsin parade to show sympathy with Shanghai.

June 15.—British Note handed to Chinese authorities at Peking insists shooting at Hankow was necessary.

June 16.—A British subject named Mackenzie while driving with a lady companion in his motor car at night on an outlying road is murdered by a Chinese gang.

June 17.—Local Chinese police are withdrawn from vicinities adjoining S. M. C. roads. Fengtien cadets being substituted. Foreign police sergeant at Shanghai badly mauled by Chinese crowd, refrains from defending himself by shooting, although well armed.

June 18.—General strike begins at Hongkong. Diplomatic delegates return to Peking, the negotiations with the Chinese having ended in a deadlock; the diplomatic delegates announce that the Chinese demands went beyond the scope of their instructions and there was nothing for them to do but to abandon negotiations. To date about ninety per cent of wharf coolies on both sides of the river have joined strike. British ocean steamers generally landing Shanghai cargo at other ports. American ocean-going vessels are able to secure coolies for loading and unloading.

June 19.—Chinese Chamber of Commerce votes to call off shop strike. Chinese rioters in Yangtzepoo district caused many thousand dollars worth of damage to Japanese premises. Isolated instances occur of Chinese in foreign employ being maltreated.

June 20.—Japanese mill authorities make conciliatory offers and offer substantial compensation for family of Chinese who was killed, but negotiations prove futile.

June 21.—Shanghai native city placed under martial law.

June 23.—When student cadets at Canton attack Shameen (foreign Settlement), French merchant is slain. Commissioner of Customs and others are wounded. British and French marines repel mob with machine guns. Foreign women and children taken on board steamer for transportation to Hongkong. Fengtien troops continue to arrive on borders of Shanghai.

June 24.—Chinese police and troops frustrate attempts of agitators to hold public meeting. Waichaioupu hands two Notes to Diplomatic Body at Peking, one transmitting

thirteen demands from Shanghai, other asking for repeal of "unequal treaties."

June 25.—Students Union requests a fund of half a million dollars from Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Dragon Boat festival.

June 26.—Chinese banks and business houses in Shanghai generally reopen their doors, but seaman's strike grows in intensity. At Hongkong Chinese generally abandon duties but essential services are kept in operation by foreigners. Americans at Hankow protest against Senator Borah's pronouncement on Chinese affairs.

June 27.—Peking mandate appoints Dr. W. W. Yen, Dr. C. T. Wang and Admiral Tsai Ting-kan members of the commission to negotiate the Shanghai affair.

June 28.—British settlement defense forces at Hankow are abandoned on the assurance of the Chinese authorities that they will preserve order.

June 30.—Students, after having gained permission from the Chinese authorities, hold Memorial meeting at Native Recreation Ground.

The above summarizes events up to the end of June. Since then the situation might be described as one of "watchful waiting." Of disorder there has been little during the last several weeks. Generally speaking the movement has resolved itself into a very pronounced boycott of everything British, a situation somewhat difficult to understand seeing that the original trouble had its inception in a Japanese cotton mill, and the only way in which the British have been involved is that it happened to be British police officers who broke up the meetings of the students when they began their anti-Japanese demonstrations inside the Settlement.

The majority of the Chinese printers of two of the British newspapers resumed their duties July 20. British mail steamers keep to their usual schedule, but generally load or unload very little cargo, whatever work of this character is done being carried on by Russians. One British river steamer is running and one coast steamer, these services being maintained by the officers with the assistance of Russians. The British cotton mills are entirely shut down.

One of the anomalous features of the strike was that for five weeks foreign workers exclusively kept the huge Municipal Electricity undertaking going, supplying power to all who wished it, despite the fact that nearly all the bulk consumers were Chinese, the foreign establishments having been closed down by the strike. However, on July 4, the Municipal Council gave notice that at noon July 6 all bulk supply would be cut off, and this was done. The Council stressed the point that the staff was not sufficient to continue the supply and that it was not a measure aimed at the Chinese establishments, as the power was also being shut off from the foreign-owned establishments. Since that date the large Chinese tobacco factories and printing offices have maintained a crippled service by installing oil and kerosene engines. The majority of the Chinese cotton mills closed down entirely, in some instances the owners of the mills themselves paying their shut-out employees reduced unemployment doles.

From day to day numerous incidents of the kidnapping or assaulting of tram-employees or Chinese in foreign employ have occurred, but in the majority of instances the affairs have been "settled" by the victims contributing something towards the strike funds. In fact, it would appear that the principal activities of the agitators are at present confined to conducting a campaign to secure funds and allegations are becoming insistent and increasingly frequent that the people who are handling the funds are enriching themselves at the expense of the workers whom they are supposed to be assisting.

The more or less well-founded suspicions that Bolshevik agents have been fanning the flames in China have been strengthened at various times by the seizures of inflammatory literature in Chinese bookstores in various parts of the Settlement. But the question of Bolshevik activity was brought particularly to the fore by the arrest in Shanghai June 29 on his arrival from Hongkong of "Comrade" Dossier. At the various hearings held at the Mixed Court, the defendant was represented by an Italian barrister, Dr. O. Fischer, who almost vehemently protested against the way in which the charges had been framed against his client. The authenticity of a document in the accused's possession became an issue at the trial, but the upshot of the whole affair was that at the first appearance the accused who at that time was held without bail was released on bail of Tls. 20,000 and at the final hearing on July 17, all charges brought against him—the gist of which was that he was actively engaged in fomenting trouble in China—were dismissed, but he was ordered expelled from the Settlement. On counsel's plea, however, the deportation sentence was stayed for two weeks.

During recent weeks the Shanghai Municipal Council has begun an active publicity campaign to bring the foreign side, and particularly the Council's side, of the situation before the Chinese public. A series of Chinese writings, under the heading of "Read the Truth" are being distributed not only in the form of leaflets, but also in the foreign and Chinese press being paid for as advertisements. But the two most influential Chinese newspapers, the Sin Wan Pao, and the Shun Pao—both registered in foreign Consulates—after printing several of the Council's pronouncements, were threatened by a boycott by the students and labor unions, and on discontinuing the publication of the Council's manifestoes, published an "apology," which it is understood was dictated by the student body. These Chinese pamphlets are, however, being distributed daily among the Chinese population, including those living beyond the Shanghai Settlement limits, by Chinese and Russian couriers. These couriers when they first began their duties were set upon and assaulted by crowds, but more recently they have been able to distribute this literature without molestation.

Within the Foreign Settlement of Shanghai itself, daily life has assumed the appearance of normality. Buses, railless trams motor trucks and automobiles are running as usual, and the financial and business district is filled with scurrying crowds, but of actual business very little is being accomplished, owing to the difficulty of transporting cargo to and from the interior. However, speculative transactions are very numerous. The boycott against the British and the Japanese, particularly the former, is being continued almost vehemently. With one or two exceptions, the large British fleet of Yangtze and coast steamers has not been able to move, and these only with the assistance of "scratch" crews of Russians, who, not properly trained in their duties, ran the first vessel they tried to send up the river aground about half way to Hankow. The strikers seem to be in close touch with the seamen at Hongkong, where, owing to the fact that they were successful in a similar movement two years ago, they are conducting their strike campaign with a great deal of confidence.

Generally speaking, it may be stated that Chinese employees of foreign establishments are quite prepared to come back to work, although the question of whether they are to receive any pay during the period they were out on strike naturally enters into the negotiations. However, apart from all that, agitators beyond the Settlement limits, are able to exert sufficient pressure, not only moral pressure, but actual physical assault, violence and kidnapping, to intimidate those of the employees living beyond the Settlement limits. The Municipal police are, however, vigilant in detecting any of these emissaries who enter the Settlement, and when they are arrested and brought before the Mixed Court exemplary punishments are meted out to them. General Hsin, in command of the Chinese troops on the Settlement borders, middle of July issued a proclamation threatening the death penalty on strikers who took the law into their own hands, and for several days this had the effect of lessening the number of assaults and kidnappings of workers who had remained faithful to their foreign employers. But more recently these acts of intimidation have increased and there has been no evidence that the General has inflicted punishment as per his proclamation.